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ABSTRACT

This paper describes two conceptual models for addressing long-range development needs of principals. The first, a job competency model for managing productive schools, presents a comprehensive view of the central job tasks of the principal for stretching the school's capacity to influence achievement norms. Changing the school's work norms requires the interrelationship of four job task clusters: organizational planning, staff management, program development, and productivity assessment. Within these clusters fall the following 10 job competencies: schoolwide goal setting, work group performance, individual staff performance, staff development, clinical supervision, work group development, quality control, instructional program development, resources development, and evaluation. The second concept a competency development model within the context of a school district, provides a way of "thinking about" managing the competency development process of principals. It identifies the context for principal skill development (school district expectations and followup coaching) and the process of competency development in a workshop setting. Six steps (readiness, concepts, demonstration, practice, feedback/reinforcement, and transfer) provide a structure for the successful planning and management of the competency development process. Principals participating in the Managing Productive Schools Training Model, developed by the Pasco County (Florida) School District, reported that the peer coaching dimension was perhaps the most powerful of all in helping them to develop new levels of competence. Two figures are included, and three references are appended. (IW)

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COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINCIPALS

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COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINCIPALS

by

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The long range development needs of principals are a focus of concern to many school districts, professional organizations, state departments of education and universities. This paper presents two conceptual models for addressing principal development needs: (1) a job competency model for managing productive schools, and (2) a competency development model, within the context of a school district. The first model presents a comprehensive view of the central job tasks of the principal for stretching the school's capacity to influence achievement norms (Snyder and Anderson, 1986). The second model provides a way of "thinking about" managing the competency development process of principals.

A JOB TASK MODEL FOR MANAGING PRODUCTIVE SCHOOLS

Current job expectations for principals center primarily on influencing the school's quality of

instruction, and the achievement gains of its students. To assist principals in their development, recent attention has been given to the knowledge and skills necessary for influencing instructional patterns. In the next decade, development opportunities must continue to focus on instruction and coaching processes, but must shift its primary emphasis to the school organization's work culture. Relative certainty now exists about the work context and its positive or negative effects on performance (Kanter, 1983) Motivation and commitment levels of workers are stimulated in a work context. Consequently, the context itself must become the focus for development, in order to influence the development of individuals.

In the model below (see figure 1), a comprehensive model of the principal's central job tasks is presented. A major assumption is that the primary purpose of the principalship is to stretch the school's capacity to influence learning norms for all students. Changing the norms of instruction (how teachers behave with students) requires that the work culture itself be stretched (how the staff behaves). To change school work norms requires far more than workshops on instruction and classroom observation. The work culture, which includes the behavioral patterns of staff members collectively, must have growth expectations, workers must be taught how to grow, and be encouraged to develop over time with nurturing, reinforcement and recognition by the principal.

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figure 1 here

Specifically, the model describes the interrelationship of four job task clusters, which when functioning, enable a school work culture to stretch its capacity:

(1) ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING: To achieve new levels of productivity, the school must have stretch goals, which influence the organization of work and the work itself. Individuals are linked to school goals by their own performance goals that focus on contributions and results.

(2) DEVELOPING STAFF: The staff must be provided with the necessary knowledge and skills for realizing their goals. Staff development plans are linked to school and work group goals and include classroom coaching, and work group skill development. Quality control functions to guide work activity within allowable limits, controlling for the attainment of selected goals.

(3) DEVELOPING PROGRAM: The instructional program must be designed for the school as a unit, and then subdivided into work units. All instruction necessarily must occur according to a master plan, with certain parameters for acceptability.

(4) ASSESSING RESULTS: Assessment of a school's productivity requires a comprehensive approach to evaluation. Attention must be given to gains in student

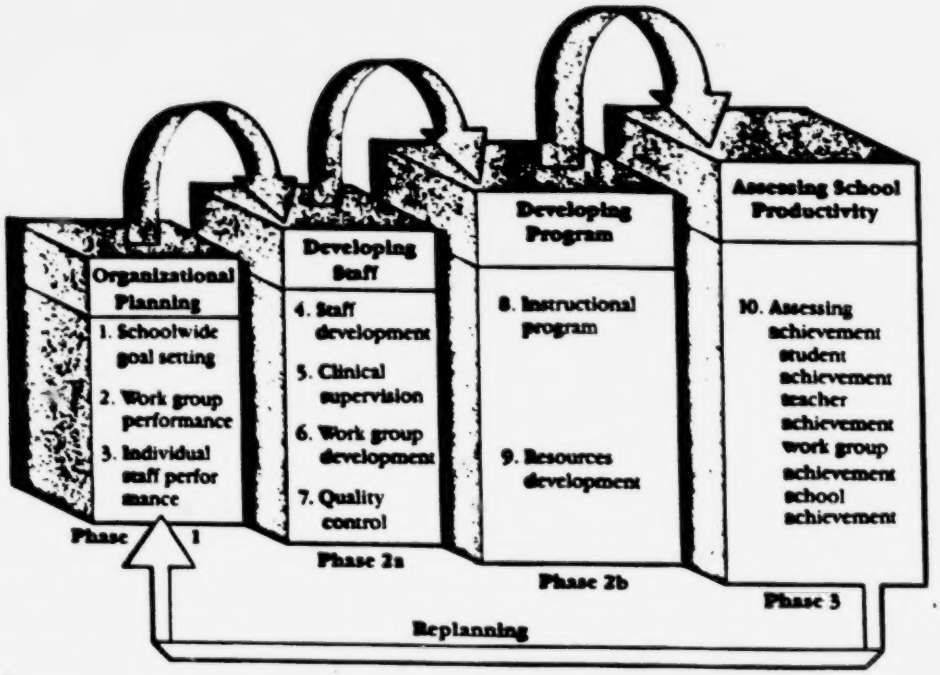

figure 1. Ten Competencies for Productive School Management

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achievement, the contributions of individual staff members and work groups, and the attainment of the school's stretch goals.

The school management Model described above draws its support from research on schooling, management and organization, industry and the social and behavioral sciences; and, from systems and contingency theories of organization and management. While the emphasis in the Model is the job tasks of principals, the ways in which those tasks are accomplished effectively in the late 1980s is strikingly different from in the past. Today a productive organization has a dynamic work culture in which decision making is collaborative (not hierarchical); teachers work in a group context (not in isolation); teachers and principals are partners together (not adversaries); work is goal oriented and results focused (not activity and time oriented); and, work occurs in a climate of high expectations, trust and mutual problem solving (not answers, fear and intimidation).

The principal's major task is to orchestrate collaborative decisions about all four job task clusters: school stretch goals, staff development activity, instructional management and assessment of school productivity. Listed below are the competency statements for ten school management job tasks (Snyder & Anderson, 1986:74,75).

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CLUSTER

1. Schoolwide Goal Setting. Establish annual school development goals through administrative assessment and selection and also through total staff collaborative decision making.

2. Work Group Performance. Designate school work groups, both teaching teams or departments and task forces, to which are assigned school goal objectives and action-planning responsibilities.

3. Individual Performance. Establish and operationalize a teacher performance system that includes performance standards, individual goal setting and action-planning procedures, performance monitoring, due process procedures, and evaluation.

STAFF MANAGEMENT CLUSTER

4. Staff Development. Develop and operationalize a school program for staff growth that emphasizes new knowledge and skills that are necessary for the successful attainment of school-development goals (school, work group, individual.)

5. Clinical Supervision. Develop and operationalize a peer and supervisory clinical supervision program for all teachers and teams, where performance feedback and correctives are provided weekly.

6. Work Group Development. Establish a healthy work climate and develop work group skills in action planning,

creative and productive group communications, problem solving, and decision making.

7. Quality Control. Establish and operationalize a quality control system for work groups and individuals that includes progress reports and plans, and conferencing and supervisory plans.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT CLUSTER

8. Instructional Program. Establish and operationalize an instructional program that reflects up-to-date research on teaching and learning, and that guides teaching improvement efforts in the following areas: curriculum implementation; student diagnosis and placement; program planning; classroom management; teaching; and, learning.

9. Resource Development. Facilitate staff productivity in work groups and provide the necessary resources for making the school an increasingly productive unit.

ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENT CLUSTER

10. Establish and operationalize a set of school evaluation procedures to assess student achievement gains, teaching team and task force productivity, individual teacher performance, and total school productivity."

TRAINING FOR JOB COMPETENCE

The Managing Productive Schools Model shown above currently is being tested with twelve principals in the Pasco County School District in Land O' Lakes, Florida. Six principals (two from elementary, two from middle and two from high schools), along with one selected assistant principal each, are receiving training in the ten job competencies. Training will occur over a two year period; school development competencies were addressed in year one (now complete), and teacher development competencies provide the focus for year two (1986-87).

Two questions emerged as training events were planned: (1) How can training activities be structured to best facilitate learning in a workshop setting, and (2) what learning structure will best enable principals to become effective trainers of other principals? The Competency Development Model presented below was designed to address the first question: to guide training and learning in each workshop and in follow-up activities. Favorable responses from principals to the competency development model, suggested its feasibility, not only for designing workshop events, but for training trainers as well (question 2).

The twelve principals have recommended that the Managing Productive Schools job competency training program, shown above, become the core training program for all levels of District managers. Consequently, a program currently is being developed for Pasco County that will enable those

twelve principals to become the first group of trainers to train other District administrators in management competencies. The Competency Development Model which follows provides the process for job competency training, and will function as a construct for training principals as trainers.

A COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The knowledge base on learning provides guidance for addressing dimensions of competency development. We know, for example, that people tend to be goal oriented in their behavior, and further, tend to seek experiences that will be helpful in achieving their goals. We also know that individuals are more stimulated to perform effectively if their own goals are in harmony with those of the organization. Moreover, when workers help to shape the goals of the organization, an even greater motivation emerges for achieving beyond the normal job expectations. Thus, organizational purposes and involvement processes function as stimulants to the personal competency development process.

The competency development model below (see figure 2) provides a way of viewing worker growth within the organizational context. A school district necessarily must provide the context for determining which competencies are important for school managers (A). Given a set of contextual expectations, the organization is likely to

initiate and to ensure the structure and support for the competency development process over time.

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figure 2 here

The Pasco County School District decided to develop its principals in competencies that reflect the current knowledge base about productive management. The District goal stimulated Pasco Officials to respond favorably to our request to function as a validation site for the Managing Productive Schools Training Model. In addition, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, has attended all training and follow-up coaching sessions, participating in training activities and leading discussions to explore the implications of training concepts for District policy and practice. Consequently, the District goal functioned to support engagement in training, and further, reinforced principal exploration of concepts and practices throughout training.

The core dimensions of the model (1-6) identify the key events in the competency development process. The six steps (readiness, concepts, demonstration, practice, feedback/reinforcement and transfer) provide a structure for the successful planning and management of the competency development process. Festinger (1957) developed a useful

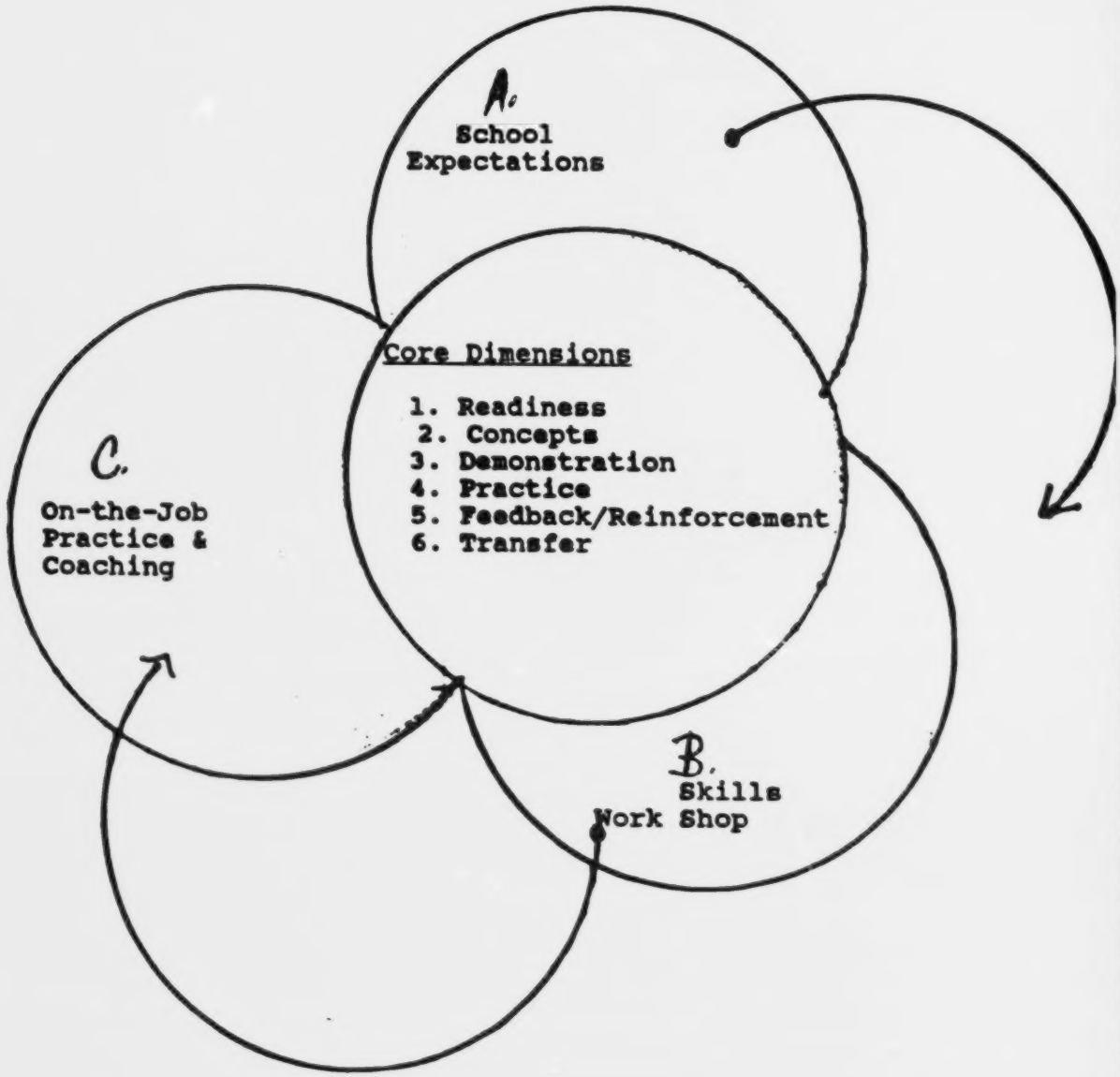

Figure 2. Competency Development Model

construct for "thinking about" the learning process. Learning, he suggests, results from solving a personal problem. When a problem surfaces, several choices exist: (1) to ignore it, (2) to postpone addressing it, or (3) to face and resolve it. It would seem that when principals perceive that District opportunities exist to support and ensure their development over time, and when the focus for that development becomes clearer, principals will be more likely to face and solve more pressing problems. Given a willingness, or even eagerness, to face a problem, the resolution of a dissonant state is likely to occur. The six core dimensions provide a structure for planning the competency development process within a work context.

The workshop structure (B) provides a useful setting for successful engagement in the six core competency development dimensions. To illustrate the core dimensions, samples from the training program for Job Competency-2 have been selected.

1. READINESS (introduction to workshop focus/agenda)

*The content focus of the workshop is provided, along with an outline of training events. SAMPLE:

.Competency 2: Work Organization

Designate school work groups, both teaching teams and task forces, to which are assigned school goal objectives and action planning responsibilities.

.On-the-job indicators

Staff members work in a group context

Staff members are assigned to teaching teams/departments

Groups are assigned responsibilities/tasks

The leader has clear responsibilities

The leader receives training and coaching

Members assume responsibilities

Groups develop action plans

Plans are negotiated

A school master-plan exists

.Training Events

Day 1: Introduction & research base

Concepts of Organization

Goal Dispersement

The Ad Hoc Work Group

Work Group Action Planning

Day 2: Teaching Team Organization

The Basic Work Group

2. CONCEPTS (that relate to the organization of work)

*Research themes that relate to the competency are provided. In addition, basic concepts that relate to the job competency are presented as a focus for training activity. Concepts and research themes are abstractions

which guide productive management thinking and action.

SAMPLES:

.Research Themes task:

Read the research findings about the organization structure and processes in productive schools and companies.

Identify the discrepancies between research themes and the organization patterns found in your school.

Organizational Principles (basic concepts):

a. Work activity centers on the goals of the organization; the group context generates results the organization seeks.
b. The most productive organizations have an equal number of permanent work groups (teams or departments) and temporary work groups (ad hoc task forces).
c. The organizational structure (work groups) itself either nurtures or discourages productive work activity.
d. The organizational work processes of planning, bargaining, negotiating,

risk taking and development occur in the most productive companies.

e. The work culture of the organization nurtures inquiry, development, exploration and success in productive companies.

3. DEMONSTRATION (how the concepts can be practiced)

*The concepts are presented in a new form: practical application. Concepts stated above a and b, when operationalized, appear in a form such as that which is provided below. SAMPLE:

.Goal Dispersement to Permanent and Temporary Work Groups:

School Goal: To provide diagnostic-based instruction in math

.The goal was dispersed to the following groups:

Leadership Council: Develop a planning model for teaching teams

Teaching Teams: Diagnose student readiness and interests and use data for student placement

Inservice Task Force: Provide workshops in diagnostic procedures

Development Task Force: Develop survey instruments to diagnose student

interests in math and unrelated topics

4. PRACTICE (make use of concepts for improving the organization of work)

*The concepts (abstractions) and demonstration (practical application) guide successful practice, either with group leadership skills or with systems designs. For the selected workshop, the practice behavior is system design. SAMPLE:

.Workshop Tasks:

Draw your organizational structure
permanent work groups
temporary work groups

Identify work groups now working on school-goal related tasks

Describe how you plan to alter your organizational structure to better nurture productive work activity.

5. REINFORCEMENT AND FEEDBACK (successful peer coaching)

*The concepts that guided the demonstration and initial practice, now guide reinforcement and feedback.

Each principal reports on system design decisions made during the practice session. While one principal

reports, another principal is assigned to reinforce appropriate decisions and to provide feedback on the effectiveness of patterns. The quality control for peer coaching in this program is provided in the concepts taught, combined with dimensions of the task assignment. By requiring each principal both to report and to provide analysis and feedback, the concepts taught are reinforced and further internalized.

6. PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

* The concepts that guided the practice activity, also guide planning for on-the-job practice and implementation.

Each principal revisits on-the-job competency indicators (under READINESS) and makes plans for practice and implementation. Thus the research-based competency and its implementation indicators, guide future planning. For each on-the-job indicator, the principals determines those skills already mastered, and those which require attention in years 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The concepts and skills introduced in the workshop guide workshop events and future planning. To ensure that growth occurs as a result of the workshop, the school district will provide skill building opportunities that include coaching.

On-the-job practice and coaching (C) can occur in a variety of ways. Principals themselves can form

partnerships to observe each other and provide feedback. Or, principals can set performance goals that address specific dimensions of competency development, and be coached by their supervisor.

In the Pasco County validation project we have selected two ways for providing on-the-job coaching. The first is the structure of coaching sessions in the months between training sessions. The purpose of coaching sessions is to report, share and problem solve dimensions of implementing plans made in the workshop, as they relate to the competency taught. The coaching session focuses on the principal and the successes and/or problems faced in implementation.

The second form of coaching occurs in the subsequent workshop. Each team of principals selected one school goal to use throughout year-one training. Each training session required that principals practice an additional management task with that selected goal. In each training session, principals report on their progress, and in addition, make new plans during the training practice-session. Principals coach each other, using specific criteria in each training session, thus building capacity to critique and coach each other and to internalize the new concepts. Coaching in this context has specific guidelines, and involves the trainer(s) as the quality control for desired cognitions, affect and behaviors.

REACTIONS FROM PRINCIPALS

At the end of year-one training and coaching events we asked principals (n=12) to report on the results of the job competency management training program for themselves and for their schools. From principals' report data, and from additional training assessment activities, patterns emerged that provided additional insight into the competency development process. Reactions form the principals are grouped into four categories: degrees of skill development, competency development training design, coaching events in the workshop setting, follow-up coaching sessions, and on-the-job coaching.

DEGREES OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT: Principals reported that many of the skills learned in the workshop setting, around seven competencies, have been practiced at the school site. The range of skill development is from mastering some skills to those that have yet to be practiced in complete form. Reinforcement was provided in each training session for skills taught earlier, a practice which reinforced the interrelated and interdependent nature of the skills clusters. The reinforcement dimension of training, principals reported, facilitated the competency development process.

Skills that were practiced at the school site reflected the principal's zone of comfort personally, as well as a response to conditions within their school's work culture. However, all principals reported plans for practicing each

job competency skills to a fuller extent in year two. Fresh insight have been gained from the initial practice; principals now perceive possibilities for an even more complete skill implementation. Moreover, the initial skill practice enabled principals to provide readiness experiences for the specific development needs of their school unit.

COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING DESIGN: The consistency of the workshop organization, using the competency development model design, reinforced what had been taught in previous workshops, set expectations for involvement in the current session, and facilitated learning/development process. A strong favorable reaction was given to the practice of using a principal selected school goal (the same goal) for the practice portion of each workshop. Training sessions seemed less like time away from their job for principals, and more like a continuation of their school management tasks, due to a continuous attention to developing dimensions of their own school. Further, by having a selected school goal guide training in seven competencies (year one), principals tended to remember decisions made which then guided their actions in similar job situations.

Perhaps the strongest favorable reactions to year one training relate to the peer coaching dimension of each workshop. Three guiding principles controlled for a nurturing and reinforcement orientation to workshop coaching: build and maintain self esteem; give behavioral

feedback; and, coach for learning. The guiding principles controlled the tone of feedback while the task dimensions guided content reinforcement. Each principal either gave the demonstration or practice session report, and/or functioned as a process observer in each training session.

Principals reported they learned as much about the skills taught through the process observer role as through the actual reporting of system designs or demonstration of certain behaviors. Moreover, the process observer function tended to keep principals on task in their practice sessions, for the knowledge of eventual peer feedback reinforced the intended outcomes of the practice session. The feedback role taught objectivity as well as a behavioral focus for feedback. Principals reported they now are better able to communicate and coach each other at the school site, as well as staff members, because they have practiced coaching in a controlled, safe and successful environment.

FOLLOW-UP COACHING SESSIONS: Principals reported that the follow-up sessions provided two kinds of assistance in the competency development process. First, the coaching session focused on practice with a particular job competency, which tended to reinforce the competency taught and its skill dimensions. Second, the focus was on the principals and their successes, problems and concerns. Consequently, problem solving and sharing was expected and encouraged as principals coached each other.

ON-THE-JOB COACHING: Most principal teams reported that they now tend to reinforce and correct each other more often on-the-job; that coaching is more objective and less personal, and that communications have improved considerably as a result of their coaching patterns. Moreover, principals find themselves coaching staff members in more kinds of work situations because of the clarity they now have about the function of the guiding principles and the behavioral focus for coaching.

SUMMARY

This paper has reported a ten job competency model for managing productive schools, and discussed a competency development model. The ten job competencies fall into four clusters: school development planning, staff development, program development and school assessment of productivity. The competency development model identifies the context for principal skill development (school district expectations and follow-up coaching) and the process of competency development in a workshop setting. The model sets forth conditions for the development of a principal, a process that can be planned and controlled. Principals reported from the first year of training in the job competency model, that the peer coaching dimension, in the workshop itself and in a follow-up sessions, was perhaps the most powerful of all in helping them to develop new levels of competence.

However, peer coaching might not have occurred following the workshops if the School. District had not made a commitment to principal development of management competencies.

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